Ontario

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Ministère
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October 8, 1992

Ms. Ann Smith
Network for Education
Without Pollution
4 Dawlish Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M4N 1H1

Dear Ms. Smith,

Thank you for your letter, and enclosures, of June 9, 1992, about students who suffer from environmental sensitivity. I apologize for the delay in responding.

The exceptionality groupings used by the Ministry of Education describe various exceptionalities, but are not intended to be a complete list of medical illnesses or causal factors. Although environmental sensitivity may not be one of the examples of causal factors listed in the descriptors, the ministry agrees that it should be considered as a possible contributing factor in identifying a disability. In such cases, the identification of an exceptional pupil should include a review of the health needs as presented by both the parents and the medical practitioner. An identification, placement, and review committee should consider the results of the health assessment in order to make its recommendations about the identification of the needs of the pupil.

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Not all pupils with environmental sensitivity are identified as exceptional pupils. In many cases, accommodations for individual pupils, including exceptional pupils, can be made without major costs.

The school boards are responsible to determine what additional supports are provided to pupils with environmental sensitivity and how the supports are to be funded. In some cases, some school health support services may be provided through the local Home Care Programs of the Ministry of Health.

School boards own and operate their school buildings and are therefore responsible for the design, construction, repair, and maintenance of the buildings.

Some school boards have built special "environmentally clean" classrooms. The Ministry of Education may consider, for grant purposes, requests from school boards for funding to assist in the construction of new environmentally clean classrooms, or the retrofit of existing classrooms for the same purpose.

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact Mr. Don Werner, Education Officer at the ministry's Special Education and Provincial Schools Branch, 17th Floor, Mowat Block, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, telephone (416) 325-2728.

Thank you for writing to me.

Sincerely,

Tony Silipo
Minister